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Experts Warn of Second Wave of Coronavirus in Mass.

Scientists said the second wave could hit as early as this fall and be as bad as the first wave

By **Marc Fortier** • Published May 26, 2020 • Updated on May 26, 2020 at 11:16 am



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Saturday's report from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health brought the total number of coronavirus deaths in the state to 6,304 and the total people who have tested positive to 91,662.

Scientists are warning that unless residents are careful, Massachusetts could face a second wave of coronavirus that could lead to additional lockdowns and restrictions.

Public health experts told The Boston Globe this second wave could hit as early as this fall and might be as bad as the first wave, which has already infected nearly 100,000 residents and killed more than 6,400.

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"If [the number of cases] gets to the point where they threaten again to be a giant peak and even overwhelm the hospitals, the state and the cities are going to have to have some re-installation or re-imposition of constraints," Barry Bloom, former dean of Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, told the Globe.

Gov. Charlie Baker said when he announced his reopening plan a little over a week ago that it would depend heavily on whether the numbers continue to trend in the same positive direction that it has for the last few weeks. He also said the state could revert to tighter restrictions if things do get worse.

The Department of Public Health's Memorial Day report revealed more evidence that Massachusetts is still coming down from its April COVID-19 surge. With 8,188 new tests reported, officials announced 596 new positive cases, and 44 newly reported deaths.

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Work From Home Impact Around Boston

Nearly 63% of workers said they want to work from home at least one day a week permanently, a Pioneer Institute study found.

Cases, but not deaths, have been evenly spread among most age groups. The average age of people who have died in confirmed COVID-19 cases is 82, with 3,924 deaths reported in long-term care facilities.

There were 2,132 COVID-19 patients reported as hospitalized in Monday's report, including 576 in intensive care units. The average age of cases in which patients were hospitalized was 68.

Monday also marked another significant step toward reopening the state economy, with another assortment of businesses cleared to relaunch while adhering to mandatory safety standards and industry-specific guidelines.

Offices outside of Boston can open at up to 25% capacity, hair salons, barber shops and pet

groomers can take customers on an appointment-only basis, retail stores can reopen for remote fulfillment and curbside pickup, car washes are allowed to clean vehicle exteriors only, certain outdoor recreational activities can resume, and health care providers are cleared to expand their services for high-priority preventative treatments, pediatric care and immunizations, and treatment for high-risk patients. Legal non-medical marijuana sales are also resuming, though customers will not be allowed inside a store.

State House News Service contributed to this report.

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